

Writer's Block Detox

Task 1: Inspiration Notebook

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You're going to need a notebook.

Get one that's small enough to carry around easily (if you write by hand you'll need a bigger one for actual writing too), and it should be a notebook you really love.

If you don't have a new one, go out today and buy one that makes you smile.

A lot of people are a bit scared of new notebooks, of blank pages. They feel like whatever goes in it has to be somehow worthwhile, has to be 'good'. This is silly. Your notebook for the Writer's Block Detox is for ideas, inspiration, notes about the journey. It will contain flashes of loveliness alongside plenty of silliness, nonsense and bad ideas. It's supposed to. Ideas need room to develop without judgement before you can tell if they're worth pursuing. If you're still intimidated, draw a cat on the first page, write a shopping list or write something rude that you'd never dare say out loud diagonally across the first page. This is not a place to be precious.

Carry your notebook everywhere and write down every inspiring or creative idea that occurs to you. No boring stuff. Jot down overheard conversations, snippets of song or poetry, the colour of the sky, that brilliant business idea, the new flavour of ice cream you've just invented or why a character does what they do. These fleeting thoughts are exactly that; they slip away quickly and you won't magically remember them. Get into the habit of whipping out your notebook and capturing it and you'll notice those moments of creativity more and more.

Every single day for the next 4 weeks, write down 3 things. They can be things that have inspired you, creative thoughts that pleased you, things that you're grateful for. This should only take one minute each day. Start now. I suggest doing it first thing in the morning or last thing at night, and you can attach it to another habit if it makes it easier (I get up in the morning, make a cup of tea and do my notebook while the kettle boils... or I clean my teeth at night then fill in my notebook before turning off the light).

It's a brilliant and easy way to make you feel more inspired and connected to writing and your creative process, and you'll very quickly start to see what works for you and what doesn't, which ideas or characters you keep circling back to, how ideas can be developed and how you're feeling creatively.

Because it's so easy, you might even consider using it as a low-resistance way to start your daily writing session. After all, once you're holding the pen you might as well continue, right?